

One of the more improbable of these Kennedy-O'Brien gestures involved Senator HARRY FLOOS BRAD, whose flamboyant failure to endorse Kennedy in 1960 clinched Virginia for Nixon, and whose contempt for anything but the most conservative policies is classic. But one Sunday last May when the Senator, a month before his 74th birthday, was giving a big luncheon for friends at his country estate, who should helicopter out of the sky but the President himself. The old Virginia gentleman was beside himself with pride and joy.

"Don't jump to conclusions," warned a liberal Senator later. "Harvey Brad still opposes us. We'll never get his vote. But he's not sitting up nights now figuring out ways to be mean."

The conquest of CARL VINSON, Georgia's prestigious chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, was "more complete." Republicans mutter darkly that Vinson's surprisingly enthusiastic support of the Kennedy 1961 program—often carrying other southern votes with him—might have been more surprising or less enthusiastic but for the award of a billion-dollar Air Force contract for jet transports to the Lockheed plant at Marietta, Ga., a year ago.

O'Brien dismisses this with a snort as innuendo. He says the true reason for Vinson's support is the simple fact that when John F. Kennedy was serving in the House, his office was near Vinson's and the two used to walk to the Chamber together; the venerable southerner took a liking to the boyish Yankee and it has flowered into a fruitful political relationship between two vastly different but loyal Democrats—though the fight over the B-70 bomber has strained that relationship.

O'Brien keeps a card index of congressional whims, interests and voting records. With elections in the offing, he is delicately but unmistakably making clear to the Democratic National Committee and the campaign committees of both Houses that the White House has an interest—sometimes maybe even a controlling interest—in the funds dispensed to candidates for office. He has coordinated the politically significant functions of the executive branch to an astonishing degree. He has trained Cabinet and agency liaison officers to alert him on their projects, problems—and potential vacancies.

Not only intelligence but policy has been coordinated. At first, departments and the White House often reflected different versions on the Hill. Now the word is "the President's policy is our policy and the President's priority is our priority."

Behind him, O'Brien has the support, confidence and authority of the President. "You know what I want," his unspoken orders run. "Come as close to it as you can." After a decade of working closely with him, O'Brien does know what the President wants. In the tense, ticklish process of trading votes to unblock a bill, he knows how much the President is prepared to change or dilute.

O'Brien's attitudes are conditioned by his deep conviction that the President—only 6 weeks older than himself—has a capacity for greatness which he wants to help him realize. A Catholic who experienced the bitter anti-Irish feelings of western Massachusetts as he grew up, O'Brien knows the meaning of the term "minority group." But though his personal politics have evolved as moderately liberal, he sees himself as a kind of human bridge between the party's Old Guard and the New Frontier.

His approach has already assisted him across a moat of cold aloofness into a friendly working contact with the intricate personality of the new Speaker. Their relationship helps counterbalance the longstanding coolness between McCormack and the President. This stems from past clashes in Massachusetts politics. Last year there

was added strain from the issue of funds for parochial schools and their curricula. "Correct" relationship is shown in the apparent inevitability of an open clash between the Speaker's nephew, State Attorney General Edward McCormack, whom he loves like a son, and the President's youngest brother, Ted, both of whom cover the Massachusetts Democratic presidential nomination.

But O'Brien must concentrate his sharpest attention on the big show in the White House. It will take all his talents as an insider to rally the leadership and the rank-and-file to make satisfactory legislative progress, especially to "pass" into place the signature of Mr. Kennedy's 1961 international trade—a revolutionary trade bill to provide a way for the American and European economies to combine their strengths and abilities to get together.

The deepest trouble is not in the Senate. There, under the gentle but insistent hand of Majority Leader MANSFIELD, the Democrats can quite comfortably manage to put together administration majorities. The deepest trouble is in the House, where members in the acid words of one White House aide, have shown a capacity to perform "with about as much discipline as a bunch of Salubra tribesmen." A rightwing coalition of midwest Republicans and southern Democrats dominates the House. To win the administration needs liberal Republican votes, but the sharp whipping of Minority Leader CHARLES HALLUCK, a veteran of political infighting, can make this extremely difficult.

Whether the administration has begun this session with the right strategy is a matter of debate in Washington. It has already suffered a major defeat: congressional veto of the President's plan to add a Cabinet post for urban affairs with a Negro, Dr. Robert C. Weaver, now Chief of the Federal Housing Agency, as its first head. How effectively the issue can be raised to haunt Republicans in the big cities and among urban Negro voters—where Richard Nixon lost in 1960—remains to be seen.

But O'Brien knew from the outset that nothing would move easily, that success on major measures like trade liberalization and "medicare" for the aged would require fighting every inch of the way.

Larry O'Brien is, obviously, a political realist; like his chief, he believes that politics is the art of the possible. Son of a Springfield, Mass., bootmaker, he grew up in the turbulence of Massachusetts politics, joined forces with Congressman John F. Kennedy in his first run for the Senate in 1962 and has been sharing—and helping to enrich—the dazzling Kennedy political fortunes ever since. To the roots of his crewcut red hair, O'Brien's very being seems to throb with the pulse of politics.

A politician learns early that privacy is a luxury he can rarely afford, but O'Brien attempts to reserve Sunday afternoons for long walks along the old canal edging the Potomac or through Dunbarton Oaks, a lovely park near his home. He is usually accompanied on these sorties by Mrs. O'Brien, their 3-year-old Chesapeake retriever, named Jefferson-Jackson, and 16-year-old Larry Jr., who, though his father thinks he has a flair for journalism, is determined at this point to go into politics.

O'Brien's taste in literature is "relatively light stuff—blood-and-guts novels, including detective stories." He likes to catch a movie now and then but he almost never can make a favorite on his first run. Though he and the President are dedicated to each other, it does not seem strange to O'Brien that he does not travel with the egghed and society set to nonpolitical White House soirees. The two men don't discuss books or plays. They discuss their mutual interest, politics.

While legislators can be found who don't like O'Brien, their numbers are often variable. Some of the well-known political elite, "Yes, but what have you done for me lately?" On the whole, the chorus of praise is hearty. "Frankly," declares a Cabinet officer reared in the rough-and-tumble of state politics, "he is the very best of the White House pros. There are always a lot of 'John F. Kennedy' guys available but the Larrys are hard to find. His approach is the one that they're no damn good unless they can be translated into action."

Mr. O'Brien also puts it this way: "He has a great sixth sense of judging the change in a man as the situation changes. He understands that everybody is different and every congressional district has different problems. He knows that every Member of Congress follows his vote this way. What does it mean to him?"

That he has friends in the White House, who feel the administration's policies, is not surprising. It is surprising that the President should carry the issues more frequently to the people and build up pressure on the legislators in their home constituencies. O'Brien's answer is this:

"These Senators and Representatives, for better or worse, are here as elected representatives of the people and you've got to deal with them. Friendly chats are all right, but it's the intimate contact with Congress that really counts."

"Why does a Congressman vote the way he does? Of course he is vitally interested in the effect on his district but—and this may sound naive—I am convinced he considers the national interest, too. He travels both roads."

One of O'Brien's toughest tasks is to convince the legislator that the two roads converge. "You can't ask a Congressman to commit harassment," he tells his staff. "Never try to 'con't a Member. Try to persuade him on the basis of the facts. Try to convince him that if he votes with us he won't get as much slack as he feared."

O'Brien's easy, friendly, but respectful approach is illustrated by a happening last January. As a kind of ceremonial exercise, Minority Leader HALLUCK ran for the speakership against McCormack, whose hallowed trappings of seniority and record of hard work made the outcome never in doubt. After the doughy Indianapolis had been beaten—245 to 154—he got a call from the White House. "I hope," chuckled Larry O'Brien, "that you'll let us win another one."

Both men knew that that first ritualistic decision of the session would be the last without a real contest, and they prepared in the good-natured grimace of politics to go to work—on each other.

#### RELAXED AMERICANS

Mr. YOUNG of Ohio, Mr. President, wish to comment on the foreign assistance program of the present administration. I feel that our President and the administration are deserving of credit for giving the program its proper name. When I first became a Member of the Senate following the election of 1956, in the fourth years of the Eisenhower administration, the program was called the mutual security program. It is properly termed a foreign assistance program. I am happy to see the present frankness and honesty to the American people.

Mr. President, I wish to say that I have had occasion to participate in study missions in the Far East, and more recently in a 26-day study mission in South America with three of my colleagues.